"The Study of Theology and the Service of Man."

"*FREE TEACHING & FREE LEARNING.*"

Address

TO

THE STUDENTS,

OF

MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE,

DELIVERED AT

THE OPENING OF THE SESSION 1887-8,

BY THE

REV. J. E. CARPENTER, M.A.,

VICE-PRINCIPAL.

"The College adheres to its original principle of freely imparting Theological knowledge without insisting on the adoption of particular Theological doctrines."

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THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY AND THE SERVICE OF MAN.

GENTLEMEN,

"Long ago," said Gotama Buddha to the Brahman Kūtadanta,* who had asked him about the essentials of a proper sacrifice, "long ago there was a mighty king, Great Victor by name, who had won vast riches and conquered the wide circuit of the earth. As he meditated in solitude there arose in his heart the desire to perform a mighty sacrifice, and he sent for his house-priest and told him his wish. 'In the realm of my lord the king,' said the priest, 'are thieves and murderers. Let not my lord seek to get rid of them by death, or bonds, or banishment. Let my lord provide seed and food for them that till the ground and breed cattle; let him provide goods and capital for them that deal in merchandise. Then will the land be established in prosperity, and men will rejoice and live with open doors.' And the king did so; and these evil doers being intent upon their own affairs, harassed the land no more, and prosperity was established, and men rejoiced and lived with open doors. Then the king took counsel again with his priest, and he bade him consult the nobles and the priests and the householders. And when they consented, the sacrifice took place. They slew no bulls nor rams, they hewed down no trees for the sacrificial posts, they cut no sacrificial grass. The king's servants wrought their work without fear of the rod and without tears. Each

* See the Kūtadanta Sutta, in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, v.

served with free service, and with offerings of milk and oil and honey was the sacrifice performed."

So even in ancient days might the traditional form of the service of God be superseded by the service of man. The teaching of the Indian sage will not appear strange to the student of Hebrew prophecy. "Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh," cries the worshipper, "and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?" "Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams," replies the prophet, "or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" "Shall I give my first born for my transgression?" asks the agonised suppliant, offering a still higher price for expiation, "the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good," is the austere reply, "and what doth Yahweh require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"* Nay, the service of man is identical with true religion. When Jeremiah passed sentence on the unfaithful Shallum for his reckless extravagance and his consequent unrighteous oppressions, he contrasted him with his father Josiah: "Shalt thou reign because thou strivest to excel in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink and do judgment and justice? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Was not this to know me? saith Yahweh."† Even in those days, then, there was a social problem. Even in those days there was a conflict between a ceremonial and an ethical religion. And even in those days there were not wanting voices to declare that the service of man was the true path to the service of God.

Nor, on the other hand, has religion failed to inspire great social ideals. Consult the wisdom of ancient China, and you will learn that the moral order of the living personal Heaven is the

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* *Micah* vi., 6-8. † *Jer.* xxii., 15, 16.

established basis of the State. Its constancy and impartiality are the symbols of its own righteousness, and the foundations of all virtue among men. In the absence of any external code of revealed law, it has made known its requirements through man's moral nature, and through the order of society, which finds in the several ranks, duties, and ceremonies, its appointed and unchangeable expression. "The great Shang Te," said Tang,* "has conferred on the inferior people a moral sense, but to cause them to pursue the course which it indicates is the work of the sovereign." "But the sovereign," said Kaou Yaou,† "must remember that the work is Heaven's; it is men's to act upon it. From Heaven are the social orders with their several duties; from Heaven are the social distinctions with their several ceremonies. When sovereigns and ministers show a common respect for these, do they not harmonise the moral nature of the people? Heaven graciously distinguishes the virtuous, and punishes the guilty; Heaven hears and sees as our people see. Such connection is there between the upper and the lower worlds; how reverent ought the masters of the earth to be!" So all men may be called "sons of Heaven;" the administrative officers are "Shepherds of Heaven;" the judges are the representatives of Heaven; and at the head of all the Emperor is "Heaven's eldest son." While the "Great Learning," derived from Heaven, in its single exercise produces a "holy sage," in its larger scope it produces a "reformer of the world," a "true king," and stops only at perfection, alike in individuals and in the State.‡ — Glance at the flower of Greek insight, and you will discern that the ideal society portrayed in the Republic of Plato is conceived throughout as an attempt to realise on earth, amid the powers and passions of man, the principles of a divine order of wisdom

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* *Shoo King*, IV. iii. 2. † *Shoo King*, II. iii. 5, 6.

‡ *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1869, p. 324.

and justice. Its several classes correspond to the constituent elements of the universe. Their virtues and duties are assigned to them so as to reproduce within the associations of humanity the lineaments of the transcendent good. To this supreme demand every individual must bow; he can have no rights against the whole, for that whole expresses the truth and righteousness which abide in God, and claims the submission, the loyalty, the reverent obedience of each.—Listen to the utterance of the seers of Israel, as they sing of the time when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea, and you will hear that the regeneration of society is to take place under the immediate influence of the spirit of the Lord. With gifts of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and reverence, the ruler shall be no more tyrannical, and under the reign of justice the people will find all nature sharing their harmony. A blast of judgment and of burning shall cleanse the guilty city, and a purified Israel will know its fellowship with the life of God.—Is it a paradox that while pre-Christian antiquity should thus attempt to solve the social problem on the basis of religion, one of the greatest of Christian teachers should seek strenuously to keep them apart? "Two ends," says Dante, "have been laid down by the ineffable providence of God for man to aim at: the blessedness of this life, which consists in the exercise of his natural powers, and which is prefigured in the earthly paradise; and next, the blessedness of the life eternal, which consists in the fruition of the sight of God's countenance, and to which man by his own natural powers cannot rise, if he be not aided by the divine light, and this blessedness is understood by the heavenly paradise. But to these different kinds of blessedness, as to different conclusions, we must come by different means. For at the first we arrive by the lessons of philosophy, if only we will follow them, by acting in accordance with the moral and intellectual virtues. But at the second we can only

arrive by spiritual lessons transcending human reason, so that we follow them in accordance with the theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity. Therefore man had need of two guides for his life, as he had a twofold end in life; whereof one is the Supreme Pontiff, to lead mankind to eternal life, according to the things revealed to us; and the other is the Emperor, to guide mankind to happiness in this world, in accordance with the teaching of philosophy."*

I.

We need not inquire now what were the historic causes which gave to Dante's view its peculiar form; its significance for us lies in the sharp distinction which he draws between the scene of social order and the sphere of religion. It must be confessed that this separation has (until recently) been practically accepted by the several branches of the Christian Church. The life that now is and the life which is to come have been too often regarded as *de facto* under separate governments. Outside the fold of saving grace, humanity has presented only the spectacle of a fallen and ruined nature, which could be redeemed solely by the infusion of a supernatural righteousness. In the struggle which was being perpetually waged between heaven and hell, the issues of eternity seemed to blot out the needs of time, and to escape from a world which it was not possible to mend appeared the only way to preserve purity and to attain peace. Launched into an empire whose political and social circumstances it could make no immediate attempt to change, Christian teaching underwent transformations which carried it rapidly away from its first author. As it stepped forth from its native hills, as its primitive speech was translated into fresh terms, as new and alien ideas were combined with it, as its hopes and expectations faded, to be replaced by others which had grown up under strange conditions,

* *De Monarchia*, iii. 16 (Church). I do not forget that Dante claims a divine sanction even for the Roman Empire; but it is not, however, as such, religious.

the stress of its great thoughts was shifted. Its centre of interest passed from the realisation of a divine life here and now, to the awful judgment scene at the world's end. In view of the subsequent eternities of bliss and woe, the occupations of three score years and ten fell into insignificance. To prepare for the final hour was inevitably the first interest. The true crisis of the soul lay there. The divine will held itself, as it were, in suspense until then, when it would descend with ultimate award to smite or bless. One great institution, indeed, there was, which was the continuous scene of the divine presence, which linked a part of earth into fellowship with heaven, and set the elected spirit in living communion with the faithful of all times. But the existence of the Church over against the world, with its ordered ranks of service and dignity, as the real abode of heaven's purposes, only threw the idea of the state as a divine society the more into the shade. The sovereign, it is true, might borrow its authority, might claim a superhuman right, and believe himself the representative of the will of God; and a crude social philosophy might justify the existence of the poor by announcing that their final cause was to enable rich men to get to heaven by giving them alms. Neither of these attempts, however, to exhibit a divine constitution in the civil fabric can be said to have held its own; and it must be confessed that the reproach of worldliness and other-worldliness levelled against the orthodox churches has too frequently been just.

Our age, we all know, is witnessing a prodigious change. A truer philosophy of human nature has lifted it out of the wreck of its abasement. It has laid stress on its ethical elements, and demanded that they should once more be recognised in religion; and it has declared that salvation means deliverance not from future wrath, but from present sin. The larger view of history has embraced new facts which teach the rise and not the fall of man; and the assurance of human progress contains within it

the assurance of a mighty law, under which his motive powers are guided, and he is borne on towards an unseen goal. For the conceptions of science, which have everywhere introduced order into the external world, are entering fast into the seeming confusions of affairs, and planting themselves steadfastly amid the relations of men, of classes, and of nations. And the great democratic movement of our time is profoundly influencing religious ideas, sometimes encountering them with a clash and collision so violent as to overthrow traditional conceptions altogether, sometimes inspiring them with nobler ideals, and filling them with a fresh enthusiasm. Nor have the minor processes of literary investigation been without their fruit. They have helped to cut down ancient prejudices which still cumbered the ground; they are destined, as their import is more and more understood and trusted, to prepare the way for that reconstruction of theology, which history, philosophy, and science alike demand, on behalf of the present hour, in the interests of the humanity of to-day. In this College we endeavour, however humbly, to open the path to such a reconstruction. It is for you, Gentlemen, to train yourselves to carry on the work. I will not venture now to anticipate what may be its future forms; but to you, who vow yourselves to the Christian Ministry, it may be not unsuitable to inquire what is the relation between the studies through which we propose to conduct you, and the social problem with which you will hereafter be confronted? For you will not forget that ministry is simply "service," and when you ask yourselves whose service, you will not long be left in doubt. I know indeed that one of your chief duties will be, in time-honoured phrase, "to conduct divine service." But I need not remind you that the service to which the Master calls us is the service of man: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to

serve." That service you will render first as teachers to the little groups of men and women who will look to you to pray, to preach, to cherish and quicken within them, by leading their worship, the springs of a higher life. But this will not exhaust the circle of your duties. You cannot serve one truly without being ready, to the best of your ability, to serve all. Each minister among us (and no man or woman is altogether cut off from the duty and the privilege of service) is confronted with the problem of the whole. Dim or distinct the vision lies before him; he knows that he cannot isolate himself from the conflicts round him; and these struggles must be viewed no more sectionally, they must be regarded in relation to each other, and to the entire body within which they occur. Each man, if he would be absolutely faithful, must learn with a new meaning the grand words of Wesley, "My parish is the world."

I am well aware that the equipment needful for effective aid in the service of man is drawn from a variety of branches of knowledge, of which no notice can be taken in this place. In the studies of political economy, for example, or sociology, we offer you no guidance; you must find that elsewhere. It is hardly too much to say that each day increases our consciousness of the complexity of the problems which must be discussed again and again ere they can be solved; and no pains can be too great, no labour too stern, to fit you to take part in their solution. And the acquaintance with administrative detail in different departments needful for those who charge themselves with definite posts in the great battle with ignorance, and suffering and sin, must be won through contact with hard facts. It is not accessible through text books; you will not gain it from the most comprehensive of manuals. But behind these requisites lie the principles which are to determine your aims, and shape your methods. If you have learned to regard life as a trust, you must have some idea of its source and its goal. If you wish to

take part in the warfare, you must know something of the plan and the rules of the fight; you must be sure of your weapons; you must understand the meaning of the word of command; you must reverence the sacredness of your flag. This is the side on which the study of theology is directly related to the social problem.

II.

In the first place, it is obvious that the service of man requires that we should know what man is. Here lies the real key to all morals and religion. It is upon the interpretations of our own experience and that of those above us and about us, that our constructions of the world and life must ultimately repose. One of the noblest of modern apostles of this service, Mazzini, recalling in later years the struggles of his early manhood, when he was tempted under the pressure of deep griefs to relinquish his cause, has given us a glimpse into the process by which his faith was re-established. "One morning I awoke to find my mind tranquil and my spirit calmed, as one who has passed through a great danger. The first thought that passed across my spirit was, 'Your sufferings are the temptations of egotism, and arise from a misconception of life.' I set myself to re-examine, now that I was able to do so calmly, both myself and surrounding things. I rebuilt my entire edifice of moral philosophy. In fact, the great question of a true or false conception of life is—whether recognised or not—the primary basis of all philosophy. I came to my better self alone, without aid from others, through the help of a religious conception which I verified through history. From the idea of God I descended to the idea of progress; from the conception of progress to a true conception of life; to faith in a mission, and its logical consequence, duty as the supreme rule of life; and having reached that faith, I swore to myself that nothing in this world should again make me doubt or forsake it. It was, as Dante says, passing through martyrdom to peace."*

* *Joseph Mazzini: a Memoir*, by E. A. V., chap. iii.

Yet the most recent preacher of this service has for us quite another word. That conception of duty in which Mazzini, however he may have reached it, found his firmest stay, Mr. Cotter Morrison declares to be a snare and an illusion. "Nothing is more certain," he tells us, "than that no man makes his own character. That is done for him by his parents and ancestors. . . . A man inherits his brain as much as he inherits his estate."* And if it be urged that this view does away with moral responsibility, our new prophet has the courage of his convictions. "The answer is," he says, "that the sooner the idea of moral responsibility is got rid of, the better it will be for society and moral education." With the conception of responsibility vanish likewise those of merit and of guilt, and man is left in the iron grip of the most rigid determinism. Postponing for the present the consideration of some practical issues of this view, it must suffice us for the moment to point out that the overthrow of the belief in moral responsibility really involves also the loss of the belief in God. The doctrine of necessity has often been held, as we all know, to be consistent with religious faith. But then it has been first harmonised in some way with the recognition of moral responsibility; and that faith did not rest upon it as one of its chief props; it was supported on an independent revelation, and accommodated itself to the necessarian scheme as best it could. A religious philosophy, however, is not content nowadays with this reconciliation. With the decline of the belief in an authoritative and final revelation, it is thrown back on the constitution of the mind itself for the ultimate justification of its faith, and if there be no answer there, it feels itself cast into outer darkness, to sob away the remnants of its trust.

I will not anticipate the answer which will be given to these great questions in your class-room. I will only express my own

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* *The Service of Man*, p. 291 sq.

deep conviction, that if God be not known through the constitution of the human mind he cannot be known at all. There, and there only, can we learn to understand the meaning of his relation to the scene around us; there, and there only, can we read the utterance of his righteousness; there, and there only, can we feel the marvel of his affection. If we cannot discover the witness of God's presence in our own thought and conscience, if truth has for us no penetrating view through outward change to the eternal being, if holiness has for us no authority from heaven, if love has for us no infinite significance, the visions of seers will never be beheld again by our dull eyes; the voices of prophets will be only empty words; and the heroes and saints who have walked with God and been at peace, can never take us into that divine companionship, for there is nothing in us which can recognise him, though we live for ever in his light. But once discover in your own heart the secret of that union, and you will learn that if it exists for you, why then for all. It may be obscured by ignorance, it may be marred with selfishness, it may be almost unrecognisable through sin, the fury of passion may have distorted it, lust and depravity have well nigh blotted it out,—but it is there. To those who can discern it, the majestic march of human progress will appear as the successive realisation of the purposes of God. They will feel that every endeavour of their own after truth and right sets them in fellowship with a mighty power for good, working slowly and surely towards eternal ends. And they will know that in serving man they are serving something higher than man; in the great order of God's providence they are themselves the agents for manifesting more and more of his righteousness; through them, in so far as they live in inward harmony, is God continuously revealing himself to the world.

And if this or something like it—I care not for the phrases of a system—be the word of our philosophy, is it not clear how

immediate and direct is its influence on the problems of life? For it can take no limited or partial view of human nature. It must eagerly welcome whatever ministers to the whole. In the garden of existence it finds no plot of ground railed off as hallowed, to be cultivated alone while the rest runs to waste; it claims the wide earth for tillage, for use, for beauty, for joy; and it will labour till the very wilderness blossom as the rose. It will look askance on no legitimate means. It will learn from natural science the most effective conditions of human welfare, and it will throw as much alacrity and cheerful sacrifice into dull details (for instance) of sanitary drudgery, as a soldier into his forced march. From economics it will gather the meaning of the mighty play of social forces; from politics the high ends of government. But above all it will remember that it has to do with no inert and lifeless mass. The society amid which it bids us strive is as a living organism, where part bears on part, so that when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; and when one member rejoices, all the members rejoice with it. Its endeavours, therefore, will always deal with the here and now. It will be convinced that the future can have no promise save in what is laid up by the slow toil of the ever-advancing present. The hopes beyond the grave it will entrust reverently to the great Father of all; but it will be assured that the only possible preparation for the worthy use of another life is to have made a worthy use of this. Its final aim must be to blend all effort, to fuse all energy, into the peaceful, orderly development of man's parts and powers; to teach humanity to know itself in living relation with the everlasting God.

III.

Are thoughts like these only a dreamer's fancy, or have they ever been realised even in part within the sphere of the world's history? If these be the products of our philosophy, have they any verification at the hands of the great teachers of our race?

I have already pointed to instances, in China and in Greece, in which the idea of a perfected society reposes on the idea of a divine order displayed in the outward world, and seeking embodiment in the relations of men. But there is one people before whom this problem was kept continuously present, and whose efforts to solve it are even now full of inspiring hope. The records of their endeavours are fragmentary and incomplete, but the great ideas which prompted them still glow with an unfading light. The history of Israel, as we see it in the Old Testament, is the history of an attempt to work out religion as the basis of a social order. It begins in the rude forms of the worship of a tribal deity, in whose name a band of slaves are slowly converted into free men and conquerors. It tells the story of their growth into a nation; of their rapid rise into imperial sway; of the vicissitudes of disruption, decline, and fall. Of the two kingdoms into which the people are parted, one is wiped out from history and is known no more. The other lingers a little longer in its ancient seat, and then succumbs to the same outward fate. But political ruin does not, in this case, bring with it national extinction. The higher organisation of its religion has given it an imperishable personality. A common faith has wrought the social bond into such solidity that exile cannot wholly destroy it; and through dark and dreary days that faith lives on to be the great agent of social reconstruction. The story of these vicissitudes has its own heroic episodes, its wild or stately forms, its savage passions, its noble and supporting trust; and the light which recent investigations have cast upon it, invests it with a fresh and unfamiliar charm. In the unique phenomenon of Hebrew prophecy, we see the elaboration of the mighty thoughts which I have named. We watch the process by which religion finally passes from a mere ritual cultus to be the highest expression of moral aspiration. Two great ideas stand out in constant relation with each other—the idea of Israel, and the idea of Israel's God.

And the bond between them is one of righteousness. Israel is the people of Yahweh, and as such is bound to reproduce in its own life the sanctity of its awful "Holy One." All government exists solely for this purpose. This is the aim which must guide its kings. By this principle all questions of foreign policy are to be decided. To this test all home institutions are referred, or, rather, by this high demand the conduct of all classes is judged; nor is the language of the country prophets, Amos or Micah, beholding the oppression and iniquities of the grandees of the Court, one whit more severe than that of the metropolitan Isaiah. But through all denunciations runs one dominant conception. Israel, as the people of Yahweh, must fulfil the purpose which he has entrusted to them. Upon its iniquity must follow chastisement. But after retribution comes purification. The cleansing blast of the divine spirit sweeps its iniquities away, and the surviving nation is regenerated as with the quickening of a divine life. To the simple political philosophy of the East there seemed no choice beteen monarchy and anarchy; and, until the overthrow of their political independence, the perfected society is always portrayed under the rule of a perfect king. But the key to the solution of the social problem is invariably a religious one. It lies in the universal diffusion of the knowledge of Yahweh; "they shall teach no more every man his brother, saying, 'know Yahweh,' for they shall all know me, from the greatest of them to the least of them, saith Yahweh." And the two great law-codes which embody the prophetic aspirations, Deuteronomy and the Levitical Legislation, repose on the same base. It is true that they do not present by any means the same picture. The one delineates a national organisation, the other a religious. The first is a social, the second an ecclesiastical order. But in both, the arrangements of the community, its administration of justice, its land tenure, its regulations of slavery, its provision for the poor, are all stablished upon its faith. And it is

worthy of note that the civil polity of Deuteronomy is founded on the love of God; while it is the Jewish Church, as it is presented in Leviticus, which formulates the social duty, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The religious history of Israel, however, is incomplete in itself. It deals with a nation; it is concerned with the problems which beset that nation, but it never permanently succeeds in really rising above the national point of view. Whenever it does so, it fails to maintain itself at so great a height. It may set Yahweh upon the throne of the world. It may depict him as allotting the destinies of peoples, and assigning them each to their protective powers. The sovereign sway may, in the last resort, be his alone. But he "knows" Israel only, and by one race only is he to be "known." In other words, the relation which the prophets exhibit between Israel and Yahweh is not a relation constantly open to humanity at large; and in its final shape the access to it is closely guarded through the strait gate of the Law. What was the agency which broke down this limitation? It was Christianity. Open the New Testament, and you hear at once a speech which reminds you at every turn of the voices of the Old, and yet is filled with fresh thoughts, with vast universal conceptions, transcending those of ancient prophecy. Do you inquire to whom these are due? We answer without hesitation, they are due to Jesus of Nazareth. The purport of Christianity is variously apprehended from age to age, and from contrasted points of view in the same age. So widely has our interpretation of it changed since the apologists of the last century, that no one now, probably, would be content with Paley's statement that its scope as a revelation was, "to influence the conduct of human life by establishing the proof of a future state of rewards and punishments." Whatever may be its import as a disclosure of the hereafter, it is now generally admitted that, in its first proclamation, it was not indifferent to

the scene around it. It called for prodigious changes in the relations and conditions of men. These changes flowed immediately from its religious beliefs; and whoever would address himself to the social problem, cannot neglect the searching light thrown upon it by the Gospels. It is obvious that the New Testament ideas must be studied in connection with their time; that their several forms must be set side by side for mutual comparison; and that the mass of diverse sayings ascribed to Jesus must be investigated with patient care, if we would attain any clear conception of what he really taught. Do not imagine that this is a light task. Be prepared for long and laborious toil. The questions which it has taken a century to ask are not to be answered in a day; they still demand the concentration of a life. But the application of a scientific criticism is slowly winning more assured results; and from amidst the temporary elements by which it has been too long obscured, the permanent core of the Gospel is being disengaged. That Gospel I do not find to be a teaching by Jesus about himself; it is a teaching about God and about man. The words in which we state it are simple; they are enshrined in the earliest relationship which we know—that of the child to his father; yet they contain an idea so gigantic that it will take us eternity to work it out. It is the idea that Man, not Israel, is the son of God. To every soul attaches this infinite value, for all spring from this divine parentage. In this lies the secret of life; in this the meaning of the authority of righteousness; in this the awfulness of sin; in this the boundless promise of the future. If this be true, man does not pace his course of years alone. There is ever open to him a fellowship with truth, with goodness, with love, through which he may win an inward peace, and rise into harmony with the mighty law of the whole universe. In this self-surrender to be the organ of a higher will, he lives his fullest life. He enters a divine communion; he is one with God.

Can this great thought really enter the world without seeking to transform it? It is impossible. It is essentially an active spiritual impulse. It seizes hold of men, and changes the whole inner structure of their mind. And hence it immediately calls for a great moral transformation in the name of religion. In the Gospels, that transformation is called the "kingdom of God." The history of that conception, its ancient roots in Hebrew prophecy, the phases through which it passed in succeeding centuries, the final shape given to it by Jesus, these topics are reserved for your future study. I need do no more than point out now that this mighty moral change must express itself through the forms of human society. There is no other mode through which it can take effect. If it be not indefinitely postponed it must employ the only means available. These are men and women, and the connections and institutions which they have reared and maintained. The conditions under which it seeks to realise itself do not remain the same from age to age; but the historical or philosophical student will beware of converting the casual applications of it under one set of circumstances into binding rules for all. The language of the New Testament rises above the restriction of nationality; it deals, as I have remarked, with man, with God. But the England of to-day, where our lot is cast and our work is to be done, is, like Israel of old, a people. The task assigned to us remains the same task which was assigned to them, to establish a community of righteousness. The demands upon us socially are infinitely more complex, but they are morally the same. Under what guidance shall we encounter them? The answer cannot be doubtful. The problem to be solved, it has been justly said, is the problem of the Old Testament; but the spirit in which we must solve it is the spirit of the New.

IV.

Nor in this effort shall we despise the aid which is afforded us by the manifestations of the Christian spirit throughout its

history. The great idea which I have attempted in few words to describe could not remain inactive when it was once launched into the world. It underwent, it is true, a profound change. Ere it could attempt to modify existing institutions it had created a new one of its own, and in the effort to preserve intact the great moral impulse communicated by Jesus, and save it from dissipation and decay, it fenced it round with the dogmatic constructions of the Church. Impatient of this diversion of its rightful course, the student, eager for the advance of human welfare, is too apt to abandon the endeavour to trace the stream of Christian influence. He declares its waters hopelessly polluted; he finds the artificial limitations of its channel intolerably narrow; he may even be disposed hastily to charge upon Christianity itself the failures and the crimes which disfigure the records alike of orthodox and heretic. He is shocked to find that the hierarchy has frequently abandoned the service of man for its own aggrandisement. He is disgusted to perceive it the champion of privilege and the prop of tyranny. He is horrified to see how the sacred name of liberty has been banished and execrated in the name of religion. He discovers that even in the "ages of faith" the morality of the priesthood was not immaculate, and that the so-called consolations of the Church were often another name for terrorising and deceit. He is grieved over what seem to him the fruitless sacrifices, the wasted toil, expended in ignorance of modern science, physical or economic, upon the sick or the poor, for whose woes we have such superior remedies to-day; and he is tempted to abandon a study which seems to promise him so little help. I will not plead now that even the errors which have captivated millions must enshrine some truths—must at least correspond to some craving of the human heart; their simple continuance is their justification till they are replaced by some worthier and more helpful force; as long as they survive they deserve respect-

ful treatment from those who seek to benefit their fellow-men. I will not dwell on the obvious fact, that all who would engage in this high calling must learn to understand forms of thought they do not share, and train themselves to appreciate beliefs which they deem false. It is sufficient to say that whoever would serve man must know not only the world around him, the environment which encompasses him, the forces that act upon him and modify him from without, but he must know man himself. He must know him by culture of the imagination and sympathy; he must know him in his misspent endeavours, in the energies that have retarded as well as those that have promoted his advance. In our own hearts love must be made wise,

> "To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
> To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
> To see a good in evil, and a hope
> In ill-success; to sympathise, be proud
> Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
> Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
> Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;
> All with a touch of nobleness, despite
> Their error, upward tending all though weak;
> Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
> But dream of him and guess where he may be,
> And do their best to climb and get to him."

Nowhere can we learn this lesson to such effect as in the history of man's religion. For here we are admitted into the inmost sanctuary of his nature; here we learn that which moves him most deeply, and which lifts him highest; for the secret of his noblest worship is the secret of his strongest love.

Moreover, if a true theology be, as I have tried to indicate, the broadest and most enduring foundation for the service of man, then whoso would give himself to that service, especially as teacher, must study the causes, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, which have successively changed the forms of theology, the influences

which have often diverted its forces from that service, and the means by which its aid may be once more secured. And he must be familar with the manifold types of Christian philanthropy, their failures and successes, the varied manifestations of Christian character. He who takes up the Christian ministry cannot expect that his way will be always easy, or his steps always light. He will need to encourage himself in dark and lonely days by the sense of a great companionship. When strength fails and the lamp of enthusiasm burns dim, he will have to feed his soul from the fire of apostles and martyrs, the missionaries, the heroes of every age, from the first days till the last. He should realise the full weight of the recent declaration of one of the most incisive critics of Christianity, that "the Christian doctrine has a power of cultivating and developing saintliness which has no equal in any other creed or philosophy;" * and he will then learn not to try and balance spiritual results and physical gain. Scientific invention and moral achievements are not commensurable. He will not ask whether Augustine or Dr. Jenner was the greater benefactor of humanity; whether it was better to have discovered chloroform or to have written the "Imitatio Christi," to have described the "Pilgrim's Progress," or to have first founded Penny Banks. He will know, for humanity itself, the author of its own history, will teach him, that the things which move the world's heart are not exemption from personal pain, or increase of domestic comfort; they are truth and self-devotion, they are stainless purity and undying love.

V.

For the service of man I have said that it is necessary that we should understand man—study him; that we should know the significance of his thoughts and the great stages of his history. I have asserted that the best guarantee for its effective discharge

* *Service of Man*, p. 197.

lies in regarding man as the child of God, with a nature capable of rising into communion with him, and destined to grow more and more into his likeness. Does not this conception, in the last place, decide for us the true foundation on which all social relations must be laid? Are they not to be based upon duties, rather than upon rights or powers? As we look out upon the great conflict between good and evil, in which the evil often seems to attain so terrible a persistence and intensity, what method shall we choose to secure the triumph of the good? There are two: there is the method of elimination and the method of redemption. On the one hand, the modern advocate of the service of man assures us that "there is no remedy for a bad heart"; on the other, across the centuries still peals the word of Jesus, "change your hearts, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "The sooner it is perceived that bad men will be bad, do what we will," says the writer whom I have already quoted,* "though of course they may be made less bad, the sooner shall we come to the conclusion that the welfare of society demands the suppression or elimination of bad men, and the careful cultivation of the good only." It is the less surprising that this method should be advocated by the agnostic, when it is seriously supposed by many of our fellow-Christians to be the method of God himself. For the wicked whom God cannot manage, it is expected that he will annihilate. This may, indeed, be more merciful than to relegate them to endless torment, and less horrible than to keep them in endless sin. Either must be regarded from the point of view of human education as a confession of divine failure. But at present I am concerned only with the terrestial aspects of the problem. For this is a question of the utmost urgency. It enters into conduct at every turn; it will confront you again and again in weary hours of disappoint-

* *Service of Man*, p. 292.

ment, almost of despair, when the outburst of one day's passion has undone the toil of years, and you are in doubt whether your efforts for redemption have not been made in vain. It is true that this method is already practised in this country. Yes, we must confess it; every time that the fatal bolt is drawn, and a murderer pays the price which the law exacts for his crime, we proceed by the method of elimination. It is a humbling sign of our weakness; God forbid that it should become the habit of our strength. It is a strange result for the service of man to begin with the extinction of men. Nay, though the base-minded be ever so rationally educated in the principles of determinism, though he be so carefully trained in psychological analysis as to confess that there is no hope for him, he is incurable, let society eliminate him if it choose; we will not accept his own testimony against himself; we will declare it invalid; he has not yet learned that humanity is the true Immanuel. If once this method were adopted, who should decide on the amount of goodness which entitled a man to cultivation, and the amount of badness which called for his suppression? That culture of the heart, which is urged upon us as one of the principal needs for the service of man, would not long survive the tremendous strain involved in the exercise of such a power. "Without God," said Mazzini to the Italian working-men forty years ago, "without God you may compel, but not persuade. You may become tyrants in your turn; you cannot be educators or apostles."

Even the great religion without God, Buddhism, to the study of which we shall by-and-by address ourselves, has so deeply felt the force of the unselfish impulse imparted to it by Gotama, that it has elaborated the wonderful figure of the being who makes the "Great Resolve" not to attain deliverance alone, but to toil through a vast series of existences in the laborious exercise of the Ten Perfections, that he may fit himself to bring deliverance to gods and men. Then there arises the distinction

between the Great and the Little Vehicle. There is the Pacceka-Buddha, enlightened for himself alone, who mounts a car only for one; there is the Bodhisat, or Buddha to be, who chooses a car that will embrace all living beings. The later books represent the Buddha as surrounded by hosts of them numerous as sixty Ganges' sands;* they are ready "to assume countless forms for the salvation of all sentient creatures, for the benefit of ages yet to come."† And as the system grows, under the perpetual play of the religious imagination, the Chinese Bodhisat, Kwan Yin, engages himself by a mighty oath to enter into every one of the innumerable worlds, and bring deliverance to all creatures who inhabit them, while his worshippers address him thus—"O great and compassionate Kwan Yin, may all emerge from the wheel of transmigration, and be saved!"‡ When it is remembered that continuance in the wheel of transmigration is due solely to evil, and that deliverance from it can only be attained by overcoming evil with good, the significance of the Bodhisat's vow, and of the devotee's prayer, becomes plain. Universal deliverance can only be achieved by universal holiness.

By the Christian, this question will be answered on other grounds than the Buddhist impulse of compassion. He will not only pity the man who has been born depraved, with a congenital twist still further perverted by an education in crime; he will not only ask himself whether it is fair that the guilt of forefathers should be thus visited upon children; he will not only deny that society to-day is justified in thus extinguishing, without penalty to itself, the vicious products of its own past; but he will declare that if the service of man rest on the service of the God within man, the right of society to suppress the evil is transformed into the duty of redeeming them. For they, too, are the children of God. The existence of each individual is not a mere matter of

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* *Saddharma Pundarika*, xiv.

† Beal, *Catena of Chinese Buddhist Scriptures*, p. 287. ‡ *Ibid*, pp. 398, 409.

the convenience or the discomfort of the rest. It possesses, even for the basest, a wholly incalculable significance; and the greater the difficulty that besets them in realising the divine purpose for them, the more need have they of our most patient aid. And so the modern preacher who asks himself—

"Why do I dare love all mankind?"

cannot doubt what is the answer.

"'Tis not because each face, each form
Is comely, for it is not so;
Nor is it that each soul is warm
With any Godlike glow.
Yet there's no one to whom's not given
Some little lineament of heaven,
Some partial symbol, at the least, in sign
Of what should be, if it is not, within,
Reminding of the death of sin
And life of the Divine.
There was a time, full well I know,
When I had not yet seen you so;
Time was when few seem'd fair;
But now, as through the streets I go,
There seems no face so shapeless, so
Forlorn, but that there's something there
That, like the heavens, doth declare
The glory of the great All-fair;
And so mine own each one I call;
And so I dare to love you all."

To this service, Gentlemen, you dedicate yourselves anew. May the spirit of the Master hallow alike our study and our work!